

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

MEETING WITH SENATOR ALAN SIMPSON (R-WY) AND
CONGRESSMEN PETER RODINO (D-NJ), HAMILTON FISH (R-NY),
ROMANO MAZZOLI (D-KY) AND DANIEL LUNGREN (R-CA)

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 1986
LOCATION: Oval Office
TIME: 3:45 p.m. (15 minutes)
FROM: William L. Ball, III *HB*

I. PURPOSE

To focus attention on the need for immigration reform and
urge Congress to complete action this session on pending
immigration reform legislation.

II. BACKGROUND

Last September, with Administration support, the Senate passed S. 1200 (authored by Senator Simpson) by a vote of 69-30. This is the third time since 1982 that the Senate has passed a bill that seeks to revamp the Nation's immigration laws, but no legislation has yet received final Congressional action.

On November 19, 1985, the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, chaired by Congressman Mazzoli (D-KY), along with Ranking Minority Member Dan Lungren (R-CA), completed action on H.R. 3080 and favorably reported the bill for full Committee consideration. No further action on the legislation has been taken.

In the past, both Speaker O'Neill and Chairman Rodino (D-NJ) have asked for assurances of Presidential interest before they proceed. On January 24 of this year, Chairman Rodino restated this request in a letter to you. In addition, during your breakfast visit with selected House Republicans on January 30, you will recall that Congressman Hamilton Fish (R-NY), Ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, raised questions about the level of Administration support for immigration reform. You assured him of your strong interest, and expressed regret that anyone misunderstood your desire to regain control of our borders.

The most contentious issue in this year's immigration debate has been whether to create an additional seasonal worker program for perishable agricultural products. The Senate adopted an amendment by Senator Pete Wilson (R-CA) establishing this program. In the past, the House has adopted a similar measure over the objection of Chairman Rodino. Your Administration opposed the Wilson amendment during Senate floor consideration.

2.

Proponents of the Wilson amendment believe that Chairman Rodino may be using his request for your support as an excuse to delay action on the bill and eventually kill the entire legislation for this Congress. If the legislation reaches the House floor, a provision similar to the Wilson amendment is likely to pass. Due to the crowded House legislative floor schedule, proponents fear that Rodino may attempt to kill the bill through delay or hold it hostage to an unacceptable compromise.

III. PARTICIPANTS

The President

Attorney General Edwin Meese, III
OMB Director Jim Miller

Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY) - Assistant Majority Leader
Congressman Peter Rodino (D-NJ) - Chairman, House Judiciary Committee
Congressman Hamilton Fish (R-NY) - Ranking Minority Member, House Judiciary Committee
Congressman Romano Mazzoli (D-KY) - Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law of the House Judiciary Committee
Congressman Daniel Lungren (R-CA) - Ranking Minority Member, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and International Law of the House Judiciary Committee

White House Staff

Don Regan
William L. Ball, III
John Svahn

IV. PRESS PLAN

White House Photographer only.

V. SEQUENCE OF EVENTS

Members arrive in West Lobby and are escorted to the Oval Office to meet with the President.

TALKING POINTS

- Welcome, it's good to have all of you here this afternoon to talk about immigration reform.
- Now, I realize that there are a number of important items on the Congressional agenda for the next few months.
- However, I think we should be able to get comprehensive immigration reform since we came so close in the last Congress, and since the Senate -- thanks to Al (Simpson) and others -- has already acted.
- Thanks to both of you, Ron (Mazzoli) and Dan (Lungren), the House has a bill to work on.
- There have been questions raised about my commitment to getting a bill this year.
- In my legislative message, I reiterated my support for action, and I want to assure all of you personally that I give high priority to the need to regain control of our borders. I am committed to responsible immigration reform legislation.

- Since the ball has been passed to the House and it's in your court, Peter, how do you handicap our chances in the House?

(Chairman Rodino leads discussion.)

(Note: If discussion turns to farm workers, Attorney General Meese should be called upon to respond)

- This has been a very helpful discussion. I do hope we can get comprehensive reform signed into law this year.

- I appreciate your leadership on this important issue. We stand ready to work with you in any way we can.

- Thank you all again for coming down this afternoon.